

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Joe O'Keefe  
617-626-1126**

**STATE ISSUES DECISION ON  
MOUNT HOLYOKE FORESTRY PROJECT**

BOSTON: Following a series of public meetings regarding the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) proposed Forest Management Project at Mount Holyoke Range State Park, Commissioner Katherine Abbott announced plans to delay implementation of the majority of the timber harvesting component of the project until additional consultation and planning is completed.

DCR will proceed with road erosion control, parking area improvements, and establish a small timber harvesting demonstration area. The 63-acre timber sale within the 4,000 state park in Amherst, Massachusetts, will be delayed for one to two years by extending the present timber harvesting contract.

"The forest management goals of the project are fundamentally sound and in time it should proceed," said Commissioner Abbott, "but an open public process on the means to reach these goals before proceeding is essential. Delaying the majority of the harvesting implementation is warranted to address issues and concerns that have arisen."

DCR designed the Forest Management Project to correct road erosion problems, improve the parking area for recreation, maintain the long-term health of the forest, and serve as an educational opportunity for multiple-use management. DCR's Multiple-Use Management mission is to provide multiple long-term natural resource and recreation benefits for the public on public lands.

"Our original plan was to leave numerous very large, high quality, white pine trees and begin regeneration of a future forest by removing the smaller, lower quality trees which were competing for nutrients, sunlight, and moisture," according to Commissioner Abbott. "A number of trees have already died and the live crowns on many trees show signs of stress from competing trees."

During the last 6 months, a number of interested parties have voiced concern and support for the project leading DCR to hold a series of public meetings to gather comments. According to DCR forestry staff, these meetings made it clear that there are a number of points of views on this specific project and on natural resource management of public lands in general.

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251 Causeway Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114  
(617) 626-1250  
(617) 626-1351 FAX  
[www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr)

MITT ROMNEY  
*Governor*

KERRY HEALEY  
*Lt. Governor*

ELLEN ROY HERZFELDER  
*Secretary*

KATHERINE F. ABBOTT  
*Commissioner*



While the majority of timber harvesting will be delayed, DCR will undertake the following site work:

- Approximately two to four acres will be harvested according to the original plan as a demonstration area. Informational signage will be placed adjacent to the demonstration area. If funding is available, DCR Rangers will be present during the summer to discuss the project and long-term management of the area.
- Harvested material (logs, pulp, and chipping slash) that is presently on site and as a result of establishing the demonstration area will be removed.
- The road and road erosion control measures will be completed. Weather permitting, water bars will be installed along the road and skid trails, and both will be temporarily closed.
- The parking area will be graded, improved, and lined with large rocks to prohibit unauthorized uses in the area.
- DCR will work with user groups and the adjacent neighbors to leave additional trees along the trails and road system. DCR also plans to reassess the tree marking procedures adjacent to wetlands and riparian areas, which may reduce cutting in those areas.

In addition, DCR will undertake the following steps:

As soon as possible, a resource planning effort designed to meet DCR's Multiple – Use Management Mission will be initiated, focused on the review of the current *Guidelines for Operations and Land Stewardship Plan Zoning and Management Objectives and Guidelines*. The public will be invited to participate by reviewing and commenting during the planning process.

Simultaneously, DCR will develop a long-term recreation-stewardship cultural prescription for the existing project. The prescription will be shared with the public for review and comment.

“The greatest value of the Mount Holyoke Range Forest Management Project may be to serve as an educational opportunity on how to better work with the public on public lands issues; as an example of multiple-use and sustainable forest management techniques; and as a reminder to the public of our responsibilities concerning natural resource conservation, wood products consumption, and sustaining our forests,” concluded Commissioner Abbott.

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